

TRIBUNAL
OF THE
CONSCIENCE.
OR,
A TREATISE OF
EXAMINATION;

SHEWING

Why and how a Christian should
examine his Conscience, and take
an account of his life.

(5162)
No. 3

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TRIBUNAL
OF
CONSCIENCE
A TESTIMONY
TO THE
WITNESS OF
MANY THOUSANDS

WITNESSED BY
MANY THOUSANDS

BY THE WITNESSES
THAT THEY ARE
NOT OF THIS WORLD

BY THE WITNESSES
THAT THEY ARE
NOT OF THIS WORLD

BY THE WITNESSES
THAT THEY ARE
NOT OF THIS WORLD



TO
THE R I G H T
HONOURABLE, S^r
THOMAS COVENTRY, Knight,
Lord Keeper of the great Seale
of ENGLAND, and one of his
Majesties most Honourable Princ-
COVNTRELL.

Right Honourable Lord,

Not long since I published a small Treatise concerning *Fasting*: and therein, the matter giuing mee occasion for it, I mentioned some holy duties, fit (as I thought) to bee practised vpon a fasting-day; as namely *Examination* of our liues, *Confession* of our sinnes, and a stedfast purpose of a better life. But

A.2

these

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these being there but named onely, because the handling of them was not proper to that place, some haue desired a more full direction for the right performance of those holy duties. And because *Examination* of the Conscience is one of them, and such a one, as doth leade and direct and carry with it all the rest ; I was vpon this occasion perswaded to reuise some Notes, which lay by mee, concerning that argument : and thence I haue framed this short Treatise, which I therefore call the *Tribunall of the Conscience*, because the worke intended is a kinde of judiciary proceeding, wherein a mans Conscience doth giue sentence vpon himselfe. And this little Treatise concerning the judgement of the Conscience, I haue made bold to offer to your Lordships Patronage and Protection, who by your Office are *IPDGE* of the Court of Conscience : hoping that hauing your Name in the Front, it may finde the more fauour abroad ; and nothing doubting, but that if it finde entertainement, it vwill returne some part of thankfulness to your

Lord.

2. A

Lord.

The Epistle Dedicatore.

Lordship back againe, by easing you and your Court of friuolous, tedious and vn-righteous quarels. For if Plaintifes would examine their conscience concerning the iustnesse of their cause, and the reasonable-nesse of their demands ; it would make them to relinquish their cauilling suites before they did commence them. And if Defendants would examine their conscience concerning the wrongs they haue done, and the dues which they owe ; it would make them to giue a willing satisfaction, rather than to weary their neighbour with vnjust and shifting delaies. And if Lawyers would examine their conscience concerning such rules as Religion doth tye them to, in pleading for mens rights ; it would make them to turne away such Clients, as brought them vnreasonable causes. And if Judges would examine their conscience, concerning the duties of their place, and the condition of the suites that euery day are debated in the Court, it would make them so to entertaine all sorts of wranglers, as that they would haue no

A ; great

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great lust to bring fruolous matters before a righteous Judge. And so it might be hoped, that we might once againe see that,

* *Mors Magistratus b. n. in-
euione, peccabunt
ad hoc quedam
causa ante annos
viginti capte.*
*Ille vero tam
dextrè et feliciter
id munus gerit,
ut quod nec an-
te nec deinceps
unquam vixit
est) semel Tribu-
nali de more con-
scendens et causa
quedam expedi-
ta, sequentem
profici iubens,
reponsum acce-
perit, nullam illuc
amplius causam
superesse. Deo
rigitur gratia a-
etia, quid nego-
tissimum illud
Tribunal semel
vacaret, letas
surserit: iubens
interes publicis
Cancel. regis
id inferri, in qui-
bus ad hoc legi-
tur. Stapleton
de tribus Tho-
mas, in vita Th.
Mori. cap. 3.
pag. 997. B.*

which is related to the honour of Sir * Thomas More (as a thing that was never seene either since or before;) that bee hauing ended a cause then before him, did call for the next to bee brought: but answere was returned him, that there was never another cause behinde. And so the Court was dismissed, because there were no more causes to be heard. And sure, if this betrue, as they say it is recorded in the publike *Acts of the Court*, it was a great honour to the Judge, and a great happynesse to the people of those times: but I am not without hope, but that the like honour to your selfe, and the like happynesse to this Land, may befall vs in your Lordships daies; whose noble iustice, and vnwearied industrie, haue by generall report, and with generall applause, rid so many causes out of Court alreadie. For the effecting of which blessing, my prayerto God shall be, that hee will confirme and prosper your Lordship in health and Honour, that you may

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may continue, to the comfort of this Church and Common Wealth, in that happy and gracious course which you haue honourably begun. And so I humbly take my leaue, and shall euer remaine

*Your Honours denoted
in all seruice,*

H E N R Y M A S O N.



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Errata.

Pag. 18. lin. 24. & 25. *advantage our soules*, read *advantage of our soules*;
Pag. 37. lin. 23. *therefore forse*, read *therefore*.



THE TRIBVNALL OF THE CONSCIENCE:

OR,

A Treatise of *Examination*:

Shewing why and how a Christian should
examine his Conscience, and take an
account of his life.

IN the Historie of the Creation, it is said, that at the daies end God looked vpon the woike that hee had made, and hee ^a *saw that it was good*: and at the end of the weeke, taking a view of all his workes together, ^b *hee saw every thing that hee had made, and behold, it was very good.* Which sheweth, that after God had done his workes, hee did reflect vpon them, and considered the quality and the condition of them. In imitation heereof, or in conformity heereunto, wise men do wish vs, that at every dayes end wee should reflect vpon

B.

OUR

our workes, and take a view of what we haue done that day ; and at the weekes end, take account of all our doings for that space of time ; and so further, as further occasion shall require. And this Enquitie or account-taking of our workes, they call the *Examination* of our soules or conscience. And surely, if we did obserue this *rule*, still to refelct vpon our selues after our workes are done, though we could not finde them to bee like vnto Gods workes, *good*, and *very good* ; nay we should rather finde them *naught* and *very naught* : yet by this viewing and searching into our workes, if it bee rightly and diligently performed, wee may, without all doubt, make our workes much better then they are. In regard whereof, I haue assaied, whether by my poore labours this way, I may propound something to the Christian Reader, that may incite him to vndertake this worke willingly, or that may direct him how to performe it a-right, and to the profit and spirituall good of his soule. And for this purpose, I haue thought these six points worthie of consideration :

1. *What generall Inducemens there are, that may animate a Christian to undertake the search and practice of this worke.*

2. *Wherein the performance of it doth consist, and what actions or performances it doth include and containe.*

3. *What the matter is, about which Examination is to be exercised.*

4. *In what Manner and order it may and ought to be performed.*

5. *What*

5. What be the Times, in which it is most fit to bee
used.

6. What fruit or spirituall good a man may get by
this Exercise, when it is rightly and carefully perfor-
med.

CHAP. I.

*What generall Inducements there are, that may an-
imate a Christian to goe about and undertake this
worke.*



O man vndertaketh any worke, but
in hope of some good to bee got-
ten by it. For, [*Omnis actio est
proper finis.*] All actions, say Phi-
losophers, are for some end: and
[*finis & bonum conuertuntur.*]
that which a man propoundeth to himselfe for
his end, is the good which hee hopeth to gaine.
This is generally true in all actions of any value,
but most especially in such as be either difficult or
distastfull to our nature: for men are hardly
drawne to vndergoe such, but vpon good hopes
that may recompence their labours, but without
some reasonable inducements, no man would
ever yelde to take paines in difficult busynesses.
And vpon this consideration, being about an ex-
ercise that is somewhat laborious in it selfe, and
very tedious to our vntoward nature; I haue
thought it necessary in the very entrance, and as-

it were by way of Preface, to consider what Inducements a reasonable man may haue to bestow his paines both in learning and in practicing of this dutie.

And for the Inducements, (beside the speciall vses and benefits that may be reaped by it, whereof I shall haue fitter occasion to speake hereafter, when the nature and conditions of it bee first laid downe and declared;) it will be sufficient, I suppose, for this place, to consider of some generall motiues: and they bee these two especially, first *Precept*, and secondly *Practice*. By *Precept* I meane such commands as God hath imposed vpon vs in Scripture, for the doing of this worke: and by *Practice* I meane the examples of wise men, who haue gone before vs in the vse of it, together with the exhortations and encouragementes, by which they animate and prouoke themselves and others to the practice of it. By the one of which it is commanded as a necessary duty, and by the other it is commended as a profitable worke, that may stead vs in the wel-ordering of our life: and by both these, any reasonable man, but especially euery wise Christian may bee induced to vndergoe this taske, not doubting but that he is in a good way, in which so many wise and good men haue gone before him, and assuring himselfe of comfort and successe in that busynesse, which God hath enioyed him. To come then to the Point.

I. The first Inducement to this worke, is Gods Precept or Commandement: such as that is,

² *Let*

^a Let a man examine himselfe, and so let him eate of ^(a) Cor. 11. this bread, and drinke of this cup. And that of the ^{12.} same Apostle; ^b Examine your selues, whether ye ^(b) Cor. 13. 5. be in the faith; proue your owne selues. And that againe; ^c Let every man (faith hee) proue his owne ^(c) Gal. 6. 4. worke; or examine his owne worke: for the ^d same ^d Auguſt. word is vſed in this place and the former. And such also is that rule of *David*; ^e Commune with ^(e) Pſal. 4. 4. your owne heart upon your bed, and be ſtill. Vpon which words Saint Chryſtoſtom commenteth to this purpose; What is this that he ſaith, [Commune with your owne hearts, &c.?] Why? *David* (ſaith he) ſpeaketh to this effect; After ſupper, when ye ^f ſet up the iudgement ſteate of ^f iudgement the conſcience, and of it require an account: and what ^g counſellye haue taken in the day time, either de- ^g counſell. uining deceit, or circumuerting your neighbour, or en- ^h uironing. tertaining of any corrupt luſt; thofe, when ye haue ^h more adu. &c. Chryſtoſ. Exp. produced and brought them forth, — and haue ſet ⁱ in Pſal. 4. pag. 26. C. your conſcience as the iudge to theſe wicked thoughts, ſtrike them thoroſ, and ^j take reuenge upon them. ^j ſaint dauid.

II. The ſecond Inducement, is the practice of good men, mingled with their exhortations and encouragemēts. In which kinde, and for which purpose,

1. We firſt reade in Scriptures, of *David*, that he practiced himſelfe, what he preached to others. He that ſaid vnto others, Commune with your owne heart; ſaith of himſelfe, ^b I call to remembrance ^(b) Pſal. 77. 6. my ſong in the night; I commune with mine owne heart, and my ſpirit made diligent ſearch. And in another place, ⁱ I thought on my waies, (faith hee) ⁽ⁱ⁾ Pſal. 119. 19.

and turned my feete unto thy testimonies. In which words we may by the way note two things: First, the acts that *David* did doe, and they were, hee thought on [or considered] his waies, and hee turned his feete unto *G O D S Commandements*, i. hee did goe on in the way of Gods Commandements, doing what God did appoint him. Secondly, we may note the order that *David* observed in the doing of these acts, and that was, hee first thought on his owne waies, and then hee walked on in Gods Lawes: that is, first hee examined, and then hee reformed his life. And heerein he hath left vs a patterne for our practice, that if we meane to amend our liues, wee also must first begin with the examination of our waies. And the like both practice and patterne wee haue in the afflicted Church in the Lamentations of *Ieremie*. For there the Church, taught by the Prophet, thus encourageth each other; ^a Let vs search (say they) and try our waies, and turne againe to the Lord: implying, that examination is the ready way to conuersion and amendment.

(a) Lam. 3. 40.

^b Ad casum la-

tar quam ap-

pefum cingulo

breuem libellum

confidem, di-

duis eum quicidie

agitantes: sicut

in conuare,

busq; omnes na-

nare pectori soli-

tarum. Climac.

Gradu. 4. exist.

tom. 6. part. 1.

Biblioth. Part.

pag. 251.

^c Consideran-

tem illam, sed &

alia quam placet;

id facere thidem

proposit. Clima-

da.

2. We reade in the writings of the Ancients, that religious people haue beeene accustomed to keepe a day-booke of their actions, and out of that to take an account of their life. ^b Climacus tellet, that in a religious house, whereinto he came, hee found one, who had a little booke tyed at his girdle, in which he wrote all his thoughts; that keeping a memoriall of them, hee might (besides his owne care) shew them to his spirituall Father. ^c Nor was it this man alone that did vsse this course, but I found

found (faith he) very many others to doe the like. And in the proesse of the same discourse, hee aduiseth men who are carefull of their saluation, to obserue the like order, telling vs, *a that bee is the best Banker or Tradesman, that every day in the euening taketh a perfect account of his gaines and of his losses.* Which a man can noway know better, then if every houre he note all things downe in his tables. And to like purpose, *b S. Chrysostom, c S. Basil, d S. Gregorie, e S. Bernard,* and others moe of those ancient Worthies, do aduise and encourage religi-
 ous Christians of their time, to a daily examinati-
 on of their consciences, that in the morning they
 should thinke how they haue passed the night, and
 in the euening, how they haue spent the day. And
 this daily care, and continuall accounting with
 their soules, was (as wee may well suppose) one
 chiefe reason, why those times did so farre out-
 goe and excede ours in zeale and deuotion. But
 certaine it is, that the practice of this exercise in
 those daies, was very frequent and vsuall with all
 them that made any profession of Religion; in-
 somuch as that *f S. Gregorie saith, That the Electi do
 by no meanes cease every day heedfully to weigh, either
 what good things they haue received from G O D, or
 what euill things they haue returned him for his good,
 by their naughty liuing.* He addeth further, that

^a Opus willi
Trapezita est,
qui quotidie
vespera lacrimas
ac detrimentum
annus cibarum.

*Quod si fore mani-
fessum non posset,
misi horum frugibus
in tabulis omnia
denuo. Clima,*

ibid. pa. 255. B.

*(b) Chr. in PL
4. pag. 26. &c
in Mat. Hom.
43. [pag. 397.
398.] prope
finem.*

*(c) Serm. Com-
monitor. de
Abdicatione
rerum, in fine.
pag. 246. B. &
de Instit. Mon.
in fine. pa. 396.*

C.
*(d) Moral. lib.
25. cap. 6.*

*(e) De vita so-
licitar. ad fratres
de Monte Del.
pag. 1016, &*

1039.

*(f) Debet [unintelligibili] causis pensare, vel quae ab eo [Domino] bona percepit, vel quae
 male bonis illius perire et visuendo responderit. Quod electi quotidie facere non cessant. Et
 paulo post, Reprobarum esse proprium sicut, semper praud ageret, et transquam quae erigit, retra-
 dare. — Ali contra electorum est, illius sicut quotidie ab ipso cogitationis fonte distare, &
 non quod turbidum proficit, ab intima exsiccare. Greg. Moral. lib. 25. cap. 6. pag.
 266.*

^a Faciat hoc
Sextius, ut con-
summatu die
quam se ad nos
tribuit quietem
resipisci, inter-
rogaret animam
seum, Quod
hodie malum
tuum sanasti?
Cui virtus ob-
stisti? Qua
parte melior
es? Senec.de
Ira 1.3. cap.36.

Pag. 598. Gy-
told.de Histor.
Vocarium, Vi-
olog. 4. pag.
156.

^b Quotidie apud
this custome, that at the end of the day, when hee be-
me causam dico. tooke himselfe to his nightes rest, hee would question
Quis sublatum his soule, What maladie of thine hast thou this day
d. confessum est
est, et cunctis cured? What vice hast thou stood out against? In what
xvi, maniam respect art thou better then thou wast before? And
mcii conscientia, tolli
diem m. c. scru-
to, scilicet dille
the like himselfe. ^b Every day (saith hee) I pleade
more remiss. Ni-
bil milia ipse ab-
scendo, rasil
Quare solum, keepeth silence, I examine the whole day with my
suum quicquam selfe, I goe ouer againe, and weigh my deedes and my
ex erribus meis words. I hide nothing from my selfe, I passe nothing
gesum ducere, ouer untouched. For what neede I to be afraid of my
Vide ne ille
impunitas facias, scates, seeing I may say to my selfe; See thou doe it no
macti ignes? more hereafter, for this time I forgiue thee? The like
Senec.de Ira,
1.3. c. 36. pag.
399

it is vsually a propertie of reprobates alwayes to doe
enill, and never to recount what they haue done:—and
contrariwise, that it is the propertie of the Elect to
discuse their deedes every day from the very thought,
which is the spring of all; and whatsoeuer they finde to
be mirie or muddy, to dry that up to the very bottome.
And hereby we may see what the practice and op-
pinion of the ancient Doctors of the Church, and
other religious men of those daies was concer-
ning this duty of Examination. I proceed further
to consider what wise and vertuous men among
the Heathen haue thought and said of it.

Thirdly then, we may reade in good Authors
among the Heathens, that their best and wisest
men were woont every day to take an account of
themselues. *Sextius* the Roman Philosopher ^a had
this custome, that at the end of the day, when hee be-
me causam dico. tooke himselfe to his nightes rest, hee would question
Quis sublatum his soule, What maladie of thine hast thou this day
d. confessum est
est, et cunctis cured? What vice hast thou stood out against? In what
xvi, maniam respect art thou better then thou wast before? And
mcii conscientia, tolli
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macti ignes? more hereafter, for this time I forgiue thee? The like
Senec.de Ira,
1.3. c. 36. pag.
399

^a what

• who had this rule given them from their Master, ^{¶ Fertur diffi-}
 that every day when they came home, they should de- ^{polas admodum}
 mand each man of himselfe, WHEREIN HAVE ^{salas, ut ipsa}
 I TRANSGRESSED? WHAT GOOD ^{quicquid quam}
 HAVE I DONE? AND WHAT DV- ^{domum ingredie-}
 TY HAVE I LEFT UNDONE? And ^{rentur, dicentes,}
 Plutarch commendeth the same rule to them that ^{ut in apicis;}
 would busie themselves in that which may availe ^{ut in ipsis; si-}
 them. Nor was the custome of Plato much dif- ^{per Naris eti-}
 ferent from this practice, ^{ut Diogen.}
 who as often as he was a- ^{Laert. in vita}
 mong men that mis-behaved themselves, was accus- ^{Pythagorae,}
 ed in priuate to question with himselfe, AND ^{pag. 181.}
 AM NOT I SUCH A ONE? or, Haue not ^{(b) De Curio-}
 I done the like? And in a word, so generall and ^{sitate. p. 515. f.}
 common is this practice among all men, to exa- ^{(c) Plato quales}
 mine or take accounts of their state in al busynesses ^{interficiunt humi-}
 of moment, whether temporall or spiritual, as that ^{nibus contra de-}
 our Sauiour asketh of the multitudes about him; ^{corrum agentibus,}
^{digressus sibi est}
 Which of you intending to build a Towre, sitteth not ^{its scipium alle-}
 downe first and counteth the cost, whether he haue suf- ^{qui; potest ap-}
 ficiens to finish it, &c. or what King going to make ^{ut nescit.}
 warre against another King, sitteth not downe first and ^{(d) Luk. 14.18.}
 consulteth whether hee bee able with tenne thousand to ^{29, 30, 31, 32,}
 meete him that commeth against him with twenty ^{33.}
 thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way
 off, he sendeth an Ambassage, and desireth conditions
 of peace. Hee meaneth, that there is no man of any
 ordinary capacity and wit, but if he be to build,
 will first take account of his abilitie to perfect the
 worke: or if he be to make warre, will first take
 a view of his strength to goe thorow with the vi-
 ctory; that either he may prouide that which is

sufficient for the successe, or else he may leave off his intention. And then he applyeth this practice in matters of the world, to a like care in matters of a mans soule; *So (saith he) whosoeuer hee be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple.* The meaning is as if hee should say, So every one of you that meaneth to be my Disciple, should first sit you downe, & cast with your selues, what it will cost you to bee a Christian; and that is the renouncing of all the world, and the forsaking of all that you haue in the world. And therefore you should resolute in the beginning, either to leaue all, if neede bee, for Christs sake, or else neuer vndertake to be Christians.

And these things laid together, that all wise men, whether Christian or Heathen, haue thought this course of *Examination* to be necessary, both in things of the world, and in things of God; yea, and that our blessed Sauiour, and the holy Ghost speaking in the Scriptures, haue commended this practice vnto vs: these, I say, may bee strong inducements to make vs well-affected to the worke, before we know in particular what is required in the vndertaking of it, or what may bee expected by the performing of it.

C H A P. II.

Wherein the performance of this worke doth consist,
and what actions or performances it doth require.

Having hitherto prepared the Readers minde to haue a good opinion of this worke, I now go on to consider, wherein it doth consist. And for conceiuing hereof, we must consider, that *Examination* is a kinde of judiciary proceeding, in which a man keepeth private Sessions at home, passing sentence of all his workes and actions, as Gods Law doth require. This the Apostle implyeth, when hauing first said, *a Let a man examine him selfe, and so let him eat, &c.* he addeth by way of confirmation, to proue the necessarie or profitablenesse of this worke, *b For if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged*; that is, if we would censure and passe sentence on our selves, by a diligent performance of this worke of Examination; God would spare vs, or he would not censure vs the second time, after we had done it our selves already. To this purpose *c S. Chrysostom* calleth it *an erecting of a Tribanall for the conscience*; and *S. Gregorie*, *d that in this private judgement there wanteth no Officer that is vsuall for punishing of guilty persons: for the Conscience (saith he) is the Accuser, Reason is the Judge, Feare is the Gaoler, and Sor-*

*(a) 1 Cor. 11.
28.*

(b) ver. 31.

(c) Exposit.

in Psal. 4.

*(d) Nec diffit in
hoc iudicio man-*

te conceptu, om-

ne misagloriam,

quod punire res

nos plenius de-

bet. Nam Con-

scientia accusat,

Ratio iudicat,

Timor ligat, Da-

ur exercitat.

Greg. Moral.

1. 25. cap. 6.

row is the Executioner. And therefore looke, what the proceeding is, and what actions are vsuall in publike Judgements, where men are questioned and sentenced according to Law: and the like course is here to be held, and the same actions are to bee performed in the examination of a mans soule & conscience. For as in those legall proceedings, there is first an enquirie into the facts, what hath beene done, which by the Law deserueth censure. Secondly, there is sentence pronounced, according to the nature of the crimes, and the proofes made of them. Thirdly, there is punishment inflicted, either for the amendment of the offender, or for example and terror to others, that they offend not in like sort. Or, if the partie accused be cleared by the Iurie, hee is acquitted and set free by the Judge. So in this Court of priuate Sessions, First, there is an enquirie or search, to finde out the transgressions or offences of the soule. Secondly, there is sentence to bee pronounced, according as the nature of the facts doth require. Thirdly, if the sentence bee condemnatorie, punishment is to be inflicted by the offenders conscience vpon himselfe; that by taking a holy reuenge vpon his owne folly, he may bee made more carefull of offending afterward. Or if a man shall be so happy, as after enquirie to finde nothing by himselfe, he may cheare his soule

(4) Mat. 25. 23. with an [*Euge serue bone,*] * Well done thou good and faithfull seruant. And heereby the sincere Christian may be encouraged in Gods seruice, and animated to proceede in those holy courses,

in which he hath found so much comfort already. And because there is no man that doth faithfully performe this seruice of examining his soule, but hee shall bee sure to finde something wherein hee hath sinned, and something wherein hee hath serued God aright ; therefore hee shall never want matter, either to condemne, or in some part to absoluue himselfe, more or lesse, according as his life hath beene in times past, and according as he hath made vse of this and such other exercises of Religion. And consequently in every Examination, if it be thoroughly performed, a man will lightly gaine two helps toward Heauen. First, by condemning of himselfe, hee will conceiue feare of relapsing into sinne : and secondly, by acquitting himselfe, he will gaine more comfort to proceede in well-doing.

By this it may appear in part, what the nature of this worke is, and wherein it doth consist : but for the more distin& knowledge of this point, it may further be noted, that there bee two sorts of acts which are implied in this word Examination, and in some sort included in it : some are *essentiall*, and contained in the nature of it ; and some are *accidentall*, and to be conioyned with it, and indeed are presupposed to accompany it, when it is rightly vndertaken.

Of the former sort are these three, 1 Discussion, 2 Application, and 3 Censure.

Discussion is a sifting of our life and dealings, by which we pull things out of the heape where before they lay confused and vnseene, and by

C 3. which

which we set every fact of ours in the open view, that they may bee scanned and seene by them-selves what they are.

Application is a laying of these acts thus searched and found out, to the rule of Gods Law, which is the touchstone of all our doings, and according to which God will judge vs at the last day: that so it may appeare how and wherein we haue swarued from Gods Law, or haue obserued it.

Lastly, *Censure* is the iudgement, that our mindes and consciences doe giue vpon our deeds according to the rule of the Law; both for the quality of them, whether they bee righteous or sinfull; and for the quantitie of the offence, whether it be great or small, whether a sinne of ignorance, or a sinne against conscience; and whether of humane frailty, or of obdurate contumacie.

The first act serueth to shew what wee haue done: the second, what we should haue done: and the third, what the doome is that wee haue deserued either by well or ill doing. And these three laid together, doe (as I take it) make vp the nature of this worke of Examination; so that we may not vnsirtly describe it out of its owne principles, in some such manner as this; *Examination is a discussion of a mans life, that his workes may be seene and censured according to the rule of GODS Law.*

Secondly, for the second sort of acts, which are implied in this word, and ought to be ioyned with this worke, they are two especially, the one going

going before the proper acts of Examination, and that is a purpose to better a mans spirituall estate, by correcting what is amisse, and confirming what is sound and vpright. And the other is an act that followeth after Examination, and that is an effectuall practice or execution of such rules and orders as may backe our examination, and make it more effectuall & vsefull For which purpose, these rules following may perhaps bee not impertinent nor vnfit: every wise Christian may, as his experience shall give him further occasion, adde, and vse more of his owne or other mens obseruation.

1. Rule. That after wee have examined our soule, we do then compare our present with our precedent state, and consider whether we haue intended indeed, what we blamed our selues for in our former examinations; and how we haue either increased or decreased in grace and goodness: that if we haue beene sloihfull and vnp[ro]fitable seruants, we may shubbe and shame our selues for it before God and our owne consciences, in some such manner as our Lord shubbed the euill seruant in the Gospell, *I thou wicked and slothfull servant, &c.*: and if wee haue beene diligent, and in some measure haue increased our Lords talents, that then wee may cheere our soules out of the comfort of our wel-doing, and praise our God, that hath both giuen vs talents to trade with, and grace to vse them to his glory. For this practice will whett our diligence for time to come.

2. That every morning before wee begin our 1. Rule. worke,

*invenit iniquitatem
in ipsius etate
exhortans &c,
enpacans &c
in aliis, &
arbitrius vng[er]o
tiv[er]e statuimus.*
Basil. de Abdicatione rerum
in fine. p. 246.
(a) Mat. 25.16.

worke, we consider what we are going about, what occasions of doing good either to our selues or others, we may meeete with, and what tentations may assault vs in the busynesses of that day; that so we may lay hold vpon all occasions of doing good, and prepare our selues to stand out with courage against all oppositions and tentations, that may hinder vs in our duties, or draw vs into finne. For by this meanes, occasions of doing well shall not overslip vs vn-espied, nor will tentations surprize vs at vnawares.

3. Rule.

3. That if we haue profited in grace, and haue taken occasions of doing good, we consider at fit times, by what meanes wee haue profited and haue beene enabled to doe well; that so wee may make more constant vse of such meanes, by which wee haue found so much sensible good already. And if wee haue decayed, or forslowed our opportunities, or haue runne into any finne, then we should obserue, what it was that did mislead vs, and by what tentations we were overcome, that our former errours may make vs more warie, and more resolute against cascs of danger, for the time to come. For by this meanes we shall every day gaine some experience, how to behaue our selues in the daily conflicts of our Christian warfare.

4. Rule.

4. That we recall home our thoughts, as wee meeete with any occasions of moment, or light vpon any such busynesse, as conceraing which we haue formerly conceiued a purpose of warie and religious behaviour: that while we are in doing

of

of the worke, we may remember to make vse of our former resolution, and now practice what before we did purpose. For by this meanes we shall be sure that our good purposes shall not bee idle and without fruite ; as in many men it falleth out, who are like sluggish people, that ouer-night appoint to rise earely, but when the moring commeth, cannot abide to leave their warme beds.

These Rules I have thought on, as beeing in mine opinion fit to backe our examination, and to make it more powerfull for an holy life : Others, as I said before, may in their daily obseruation adde more, and perhaps finde out some better then these. And as in the ordering of our bodily health, Phyisicians aduise their Patients to follow that whereof they finde good, and to auoyd that which doth not agree with their temper : so it is good counsell in the ordering of our soules, to make daily vse of that which by expeience wee finde either to strengthen grace, or to weaken sinne in vs : and contrariwise to flee from all such occasions and usages, as wee see or have found to hurt or endanger vs. I onely adde thus much more ; That these later sort of acts, whereof now I haue beeene speaking, though in themselves simply considered they bee but *Adiuncts* and *Attendants* on Examination, without which it may subsist in its bare nature ; and therefore are not necessary *ad eft*, as the Schooles doe speake : yet in the vse of the word, and in the intendement of the Scripture they are implied, included, and presupposed to goe with it and at-

-D attend

tend it, as being necessary *ad bene esse*, to the well doing of this worke: as may appeare by these reasons.

1. Reason.

1 Joh.3.4.

1. It is the vse and custome of Scripture, vnder words of knowledge belonging to the vnderstanding, to comprehend affections and practice. As when S. John saith, *Hee that saith, I knowe God, and keepeth not his Commandements, is a lyer, and the truth is not in him*: hee meaneth not by the word [*know*] a bare and simple knowing and apprehending, which the learned call [*cognitio apprehensio*]; but he meaneth an effectuall and working knowledge, which breedeth or bringeth forth such affections in the heart, and such actions in the life, as that knowledge directeth men to: which knowledge they call [*cognitio affectio*]. And so in this case, Examination is properly a worke of the vnderstanding, singling things out of the confused heape, that they may appere what they are: but by way of consequent it doth imply such affections and actions, as this worke of the vnderstanding is intended for, which is the bettering and amending of our spirituall estates, and the ordering of every thing for the best aduantage of our soules and salutions.

2. Reason.

1 Cor.11.28.

2. Secondly, that thus much is implied and intended by this word, may hereby appeare, that the Apostle speaking of the danger of vnworthy receiving of the Lords Supper, and prescribing meanes to correct all abuse that way, saith; *Let a man examine himselfe, and so let him eate of this Breade and drinke of this Cup*. For if by the word [*examine*]

[*examine*]

[examine] he meant nothing but *discusing* and sifting without correcting and amending; hee should allow men to goe to the Communion with the conscience of sinne, and without reformation of life. And which is yet worse, should approue of a man as a worthy guest at the Lords Table, onely because he hath learned to know his estate, though he no way meane to amend it; whereas this knowledge of a mans selfe would increase his sinne, and make him the lesse welcome vnto God, according to that rule of our Saviour, *That* Luk. 12. 47. *servans which knew his Lords will, and prepared not himselfe, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.* And therefore when the Apostle saith, *Let a man examine, and so let him eat;* hee meaneth, that after hee hath examined, hee should amend whatsoever is amiss, and performe whatsoever vpon examination hee shall finde necessarie or fit to be done. And hence it followeth, that a purpose to amend our life, and to doe what vpon our examining shall appeare good for our soules, is a necessary duty, as an antecedent act that should goe before Examination; and that a practise of such things, as by tryall shall appeare viefull for this purpose, is another necessary dutie, as a consequent act that should follow after it. And so in conclusion it appeareth, that there are three especiall acts required for the right performance of this worke: 1, a constant resolution to amend and better the estate of the soule; 2, a diligent

ligent search, thereby to gaine the right knowledge of it: and 3, an effectuall performance of all such things, as are auailable for this purpose. And out of all these laied together, we may make a more full description to this purpose; Examination is a *Discussion of a mans life, for finding out the true estate of a mans soule toward GOD; accompanied with a purpose and endeour to doe whatsoever upon tryall shall appeare requisite for salvation and the good of a mans soule.*

C H A P. III.

Of the Object of this worke, or the matter about which it is to be exercised.

Hitherto we haue spoken of the acts, now we are to consider of the Object, or matter about which they are to bee bestowed and employed. And it may bee considered two wayes; either generally, and such as it is in the largest extent, which wee may call, the *adequate object*; or specially, and such as is in more principall manner to bee respected and looked to, which may bee called the *Principall or speciall object.*

I. And first for the *adequate Object*, including every thing that ought to be examined, or about which a Christian should examine himselfe; it is *whatsoever either thought, word or deede, which carrieth*

carrieth any respect either of righteousness or sinfulness in it, or all both our good and our euill acts. For Examination beeing (as before was noted) a kinde of iudiciary proceeding with our owne soules, in which wee keepe Sessions at home, that we may prepare for the great Iudgement: it hath for its object the same matter, that shall be discussed and sentenced at the day of the last Iudgement. And that is, (as *Selomon telleth vs*) *every worke whether good or euill.* For a *G O D* (a) *Eccles. 12. 14.* (saith hee) *shall bring every work into judgement,* ^{14.} *with every secret thing, whether it be good or euill:* that is, every thing that is morally euill or morally good, or which is either sinfull or righteous. And therefore in imitation of Gods proceeding in his Iudgement, we also shoule proceed in our judging of our selues; which is to consider of every thing, which is either good or euill, sinfull or righteous, a breach of Gods Law, or a performance of it.

But for our more distinct understanding; and our better direction herein, it will not be amisse to consider our good and our euill workes each apart by them selues.

And first for our euill deedes or our sinnes, we may note these rules following.

1. We must consider and examine our selues, as well concerning our omissions of duties, as commissions of sins. For in the last Iudgement, our Lord, the Judge of quick and dead, he will not onely give sentence against murders and oppressions and robberies, and such like, but ^{(b) Mat. 25. 41.} ^{42, 43.} *but also* *against* *the* *unmerciful* *and* *unmerciful* *men.*

gainst vnceritulnesse also, and the not feeding of the hungry, the not lodging of the stranger, the not cloathing of the naked, the not visiting of the sick, &c. And so when we are to iudge our selues, we must censure not onely our hurting of our neighbour, but our not helping of him; nor onely our backbiting of our neighbour, but our not defending of his good name; nor onely our persecuting of Gods Word, but our not profiting by it; nor onely our robbing of the poore, but our not relieving of them: and so in all other the like cases, our *not doing* of that which is good, when dutie doth require it of vs, is culpable before God, and is part of that matter about which our Examination ought to be exercised.

2. We must consider not onely the substance of our sinnes, but the circumstances of them also; such as are the persons, the time, the place, the faction or manner of doing, &c. for all these may either aggrauate or mitigate the sinne. So we see that the treason of *Iudas* is counted the more grieuous, because he was one of Christ's familiar friends, which did eat of his breade: and *Manasses* his idolatry was the more hainous, because hee

Psal. 41. 9. &
John 13. 18.

(a) 1 Chron.
33. 7.

(b) Isa. 5. 3. 4.

a set his idoll in the House of God, of which G O D had said to David, and to Solomon his Sonne, In this House and in Jerusalem which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever. And so, the cruell dealing of the Iewes was the more hainous, because *in the day of their fast, they did exact all their labours, and did smite with the fist of wickednesse.* And *Solomons idolatry did anger and offend*

offend God the more, because *this heart was turned* (a) 1 King. 11.
from the Lord, which had appeared unto him twice, 9, 10.
and had commanded him concerning this thing, that
he should not goe after other Gods. And so our sinnes
will be the more grievous, if we wrong them who
haue helped vs, or if in the Church of God, and
in the time of his seruice, our hearts do meditate
reuenge, or forecast vnjust deuices, or take plea-
sure to think on our fleshly lusts, &c. And there-
fore these circumstances are to come into the ac-
count together with the maine sinnes.

3. Thirdly, not onely the sinne, but the occa-
sion of it is to be considered: for this may either
increase or diminish the guiltinesse of it. As the
rich man that had many sheepe of his owne, and
yet tooke away *the poore mans lamb*, to make his ^{2 Sam. 13.1.}
friend welcome with, was the more grievous of
fender by much, because hauing no neede, hee did
rob the poore man. And againe, the considerati-
on of the occasion or prouocation by which
wee were led into sinne, may teach vs wisedome,
by shunning such occasions to escape from the
sinnes.

4. Fourthly, we are to reckon among our sinnes,
that must be accounted for, not onely our com-
missions of euill deedes, and omissions of good
duties, but even our vnpesect and defective per-
formances. For of these the Church of God
doth accuse themselves; ^b *All our righteousnesses* (b) Isa. 64.6.
are as filthy rags: and in respect of these it
was, that the High Priest was by the Law ^c to (c) Exod. 19.18
*carry the iniquity of the holy things, which the chil-
dren.*

children of Israel should hallow, in all their holy gifts. For that doth imply, that the services of Gods people had their imperfections and errors, which because they were failings in duties, were to bee borne by Jesus our High-Priest, as our other sinnes were. And therefore we must reckon with our selues not onely for omitting or neglecting the exercises of Religion, but for our *distractions*, our *wandering thoughts*, and our *cold and dull affections*, while we did performe them.

Thus our euill deeds or sinnes may be considered: our good workes and holy duties may not be neglected neither; and that for these reasons.

1. Because we are many times deceived with shewes; thinking that to be good which is euill, and that to be some great good, which is but a poore seruice in comparison. Thus ^a Paul thought

(a) Phil.3.6. he shewed much *zeal*, when he persecuted the
(b) Judge.17.13. *Church of Christ*: and ^b Micah thought hee had highly demerited Gods fauour, when hee kept a Priest for Idolatrous seruice: and Iehu boasted

(c) 1 King.10. of his killing of *Ahabs* children; *Come with me*,
16. (saith he) and see my *zeale for the Lord*: when as God censured it for vniust shedding of blood;

(d) Hos.1.4. *Yet a little while* (saith God) *and I will avenge the blood of Iezrel upon the house of Iehu*. And so wee are too apt to ouerweene our selues and our owne workes; and think that we are zealous for God, when we are envious against men; or ambitious for our selues. And for discerning of this corruption, examination is necessary to be vsed about those workes which wee esteem to bee righteous

righteous and holy, lest we deceiue our selues by ouer-partiall iudgement.

2. Because in the very works which are truely good, wee do many times intermingle corruptions of our owne. For sometimes there are ill ends in our good deeds, as ^a *Iezebel* proclaimed ^{(a): King. 21.} a fast to cloake her murder withall, and ^b the *Pha* ^{(b): Mat. 6. 1, 5,} ^{9.} rises fasted and prayed and gaue almes, for gai- ^{16.} ning of vaine praises. And sometimes our good duties are performed in an euill manner; as ^c the ^{(c): Exod. 1. 17,} *Midwiues* saued the childrens lives, by telling of ^{19.} alye; and ^d *Zipporah* circumcised her sonne, in a ^{(d): Exod. 4. 25.} pertish humour; and ^e *Uzzah* stayed the Arke ^{(e): Chron. 13.} from falling, without sufficient warrant for such ^{9. compared} a worke. But most times there are distractions, ^{with cap. 15.} and worldly or perhaps wicked thoughts in the midst of our best devotions: and alwayes there are defects and imperfections and failings, when we are most fervent and best affected. And for discerning of these, our best works deserue a strict account, that we may learn to separate the *precious from the vile*: and neither be too highly conceited of our weake performances, nor too little affected with our corruptions and infirmities.

3. Our good works are to be considered in our Examinations, that by those things which are able to abide the touchstone, we may gaine courage against oppositions of men, and comfort against the tentations of Satan, and a settled resolution to proceede and goe on in a daily practice of good works; alwayes praising God for

these mercies ; because it is hee that worketh in vs both the will and the deed. And in these respects, the consideration of our good workes is not without good vse. And this may suffice for the adequate obiect, or the matter of Examination in generall and in the largenesse of it.

II. Secondly, for the principall Obiect, or the speciall matter which is to come into Examination, it is euery such sinne as is likely to breed vs some speciall danger. For if a Citie be besieged, w^{ch} Gouvernours will take care of euery posterne doore, and of euery part of the Wals, to repaire what is decayed, and to keepe all safe from the Enemie : but if one Gate be more likely to bee entred than other, or if any part of the Wall bee weaker or more easily to be broken downe , men will there set the watch the surest, where the danger is the greatest. And if a man be distempered with sundry diseases , a wise Physician will take care of all, to ease the Patient as much as may be, of every one of them : but if some speciall disease be more dangerous to the sicke man, than others are ; the Physician will bend his cure that way especially, where the life of his Patient is most endangered. And so it is, or should be with vs in respect of our soules : Wee haue heere a *Fort* to keepe, which is euery day assaulted by our Enemies ; and we haue a *diseased soule* of our owne, distempered with many spirituall maladies : but some maladies are worse then other ; and some parts of this Fort are weaker or more in danger then others are : I meane, there are some sinnes,

by

by which the Deuill may more easily surprize and captiuate our soules. And therefore, as wee should keepe diligent watch against them all; so wee should especially bend our forces against those that do or may more especially breed vs harme, and hinder our saluation. And consequently, Examination being an approued meanes for grubbing vp of sinne, wee should apply this exercise against all sinnes in generall; but more especially against those, from which we may in reason feare the greatest danger. And these are either such sinnes as are *easily contracted*, or such as are *hardly recovered*. For into the one sort men fall often, and out of the other they doe seldomer recover, if they once fall into them: and so the one sort will endanger vs by the *frequencie* of our falls, and the other by the *difficultie* of our rising, after we bee downe. But for better and more distinct understanding of this point, wee may in a more particullar manner consider the severall sorts of sinne, which in either of these two respects may breed some especiall danger. And of this kinde I take these sinnes following to bee.

1. Those that be great and *reigning* sins: such as the Apostle saith do exclude a man out of Gods Kingdome, And in this kinde he reckoneth, ^{a for.} *nication, idolatrie, adulterie, effeminatenesse, sodomie, theft, covetousnesse, drunkennesse, revilings, extortion.* Of which sinnes, and such like, he saith, that they that are guilty of them, *shall not inherit the Kingdome of God.* And he meaneth, that while they are such, or till by repentance and forsaking of

(a) 1 Cor. 6. 9.
Gal. 5. 19,
20, 21.

them, they haue obtained pardon, they shall never come into Gods Kingdome. Against these

(a) Psal. 19. 13.

(b) Psal. 19. 12.

(c) 1 Ioh. 1. 8.

^a nequam de-

creta est remissio

peccatorum a te

peccatoris, n*o* q*u*i*o*

unquam aliis con-

dutorum concessis

est. D. Abbot

in Tomson.

cap. 24. pag.

212. Vide c-

tionem cap. 22.

23, 27, &c.

^b peccatorum [peccatum] regnum,

quia in peccatum

sum in peccato

et in peccato

damnum cum reu-

fractio. Vel. in

Catech. part. 1.

q. 7 pag. 62.

^c in peccatis

voluntate, et in peccato

et in peccato, et in peccato

damnable guiltiness, and doe lose their present aptitude to enter into the Kingdome of Heaven. Thus our learned men speake: and they learned it from the blessed Apostle. For he saith, that ^a *they which doe* (a) *Galat. 5. 19.*
such things, shall not inherit the Kingdome of God.

And writing to the *Cerinthians*, he saith, ^b *Neither* (b) ^{1 Cor. 6, 9.}
fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor adulterers, &c. shall ^{10, 11.}
inherit the Kingdome of God. And such were some
of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, &c. Where we may first note, that the Apostle maketh an opposition betweene being *fornicators or idolaters, &c.* and being *washed or sanctified*, after the committing of these sinnes. And this sheweth, that men being once guiltie of these sinnes, do still remaine *fornicators, idolaters, &c.* till they be *washed and sanctified from them*: which without true and serious repentance they cannot be imagined to bee. And consequently, they who have committed such sinnes, remaine such sinners, till they haue repented. Secondly we may consider, that the Apostle saith of such sinners, *that they shall not inherit the Kingdome of God: Neither fornicators, nor Idolaters, &c.* And from hence it followeth, that men who haue committed these sianes, are for the present, that is, till they repent, *deprived of all interest unto heaven.* And in respect of all this, every Christian should haue an especiall care to examine his soule concerning these grosser sinnes, that he doe not suffer himselfe to lye and lyce in any of them.

2. Of the same kinde are sianes of *recidivation and relapse*, when we fall backe into the former siane;

after our repentance, and vowes of a better life. For relapses into sicknesse are dangerous for the body; and relapses into sin are no lesse dangerous for the soule; and that (as a learned man hath well obserued) in these 3. respects: 1. Because corrupt nature after restraint groweth more fierce: like a Mastine that breaketh loose after he hath beene tyed; or like a Riuier, that hath broke thorow the banke that kept it in. 2. Because Satan is more malicious against such as haue once escaped out of his fetters; like a Tailour that hath recovered the prisoner that broke from him. 3. Because God layeth iudgements on such Apostates, and poureth the Spirit of slumber upon them. In which respects the sinner is in much more danger by relapse then he was before. And therefore our Sauiour said to the man whom hee had cured of his lamenesse, *Sinne no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee:* and that if the uncleane spirit, which hath beene cast out of a man, do returne and finde the house swept and garnished, that is, made fit for the habitation of such a guest, then he goeth and taketh with him seuen other spirits more wicked then himselfe, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse then the first. By this it appeareth, that these kinde of sins into which we haue fallen before, if after our recouery we relapse into them againe, are most dangerous and prejudicall to a mans soule. And therefore when we call our soules to account, we should more especially examine them concerning the former sinnes, which wee committed before time, that we may see how well or how ill wee haue

Ioh. 5.14.

Luk. 11.24.

(a) M^r. Cata-
ker in his Spi-
rituall Watch,
§ 9. pag. 12, 13.

haue continued the course of our repentance and amendment.

3. Sinnes that sute with our owne *dispositions* ; See Mr. Gatak,
Spirituall
Watch, § 10.
P 28-34. such, I meane, as wee are inclined vnto, either through temper of nature or custome of life. For these sinnes may breed speciall danger, because we are ready to drop into them, when no other Tempter driueth vs, beside our owne corruption. Of such *David* seemeth to speake, when he saith, *I kept my selfe from mine iniquitie.* And of such Psal. 18. 23. wee also shoulde beware. And therefore in the daily care of our soules, wee shoulde more especially question and examine them concerning those sinnes, to which we are addicted or disposed, either by nature or by custome.

4. The sinnes of each mans particular *calling*, Gatak Spirituall
Watch, § 19. pag. 32. or *trade*, may especially endanger him, because he hath by his very course of life, so many and so vnuall occasions to be tempted by them. Neutt a day, nor scarce an houre of a day, but some businesse will come in his way, either in dealing with others, or in deliberating by himselfe, by which he may be occasioned either to omit some dutie, or to doe some wrong, or to follow some neerer way of thriving than G O D doth allow him. And amidst so many and frequent occasions, it will bee hard to stand vpright, without much care and watchfulnes. And therefore as S. *Paul* prescribeth vnto severall men, the duties that belong to their severall states and conditions ; as to him that hath the gift of *prophecie*, that hee Rom. 12. 6. prophecie according to the proportion of faith ; and to him.

him that hath an office, that he waite upon his office, and so he that teacheth, on teaching, &c: so, if we desire to looke into the state of our soules, and to learne from our owne hearts, how well or how ill we have done our duties, we should haue an especiall eye to such things as appertaine to our particular places and callings.

3. The sinnes of the *time*, *place* and *companie* in which we liue, haue speciall danger in them. For first, they will draw vs by their very example to partake with them; in so much, as that men who at the beginning do abhorte them, yet by continuance of time, are insensibly carried with them, before themselues can tell how. And secondly, *euill men* do desire *companie* in their sinne, and do vsually strive by all perswasions to winne ouer to their side, those that are better af-

(e) *Prov. 1.10*, *fe*cted. And therefore *Solomon* saith; *My sonne, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, let vs lay waste for blood, &c; we shall finde all precious substance, wee shall fill our houses with spoile; cast in thy lot among us, let vs all haue one purse: My sonne, walke not thou in the way with them, &c.* In which words, *Solomon* first supposeth that sinners will entice, and vse all plausible allurements to perswade others to their society; and then hee aduiseth the righteous to take heede of them and their sugred baites. And so, if we liue among such men, we must expect prouocation from them, and therefore should vse all prouidence for freeing of our selues of them. Thirdly, *wicked men*, if they cannot winne others

others to take part with them, yet they will ~~wa-~~
 lefft them, because their contrarie life is an open
 shame to these mens dealings. And therefore
 the Wise man bringeth in the wicked, thus deli-
 berating or rather resolving with themselves; ^(a) *Wisd. 3. 13,*
Let us lye in waite for the righteous, because he is not &c.
for our turne, and he is cleane contrarie to our doings:
be upbraideth vs with our offending the Law, and ob-
jecteth to our infamie the transgessions of our aduersa-
tes.—He was made to reprove our thoughts, he is grie-
vous to vs, even to behold: for his life is not like o-
ther mens, his wises are of another facion: &c. And
this daily molestation from the wicked, will make
good men afraid to doe well, for feare of giuing
offence, or incurring danger: which made David
*to say, that ^b *the rod of the wicked should not rest up-* ^(b) *Psal. 115. 3.*
on the lot of the righteous: left the Righteousnes *put*
forth their hands vnto iniquitie: implying, that if
the wicked were suffered still to scourge and mo-
lest Gods people, it might bee a meanes to make
them forsake their integritie, either by seeking to
pacifie the wicked, or to protect themselves. By
these considerations it appeareth, that in the com-
pany of euill men are many prouocations to sinne,
partly by their bare example, partly by their euill
counsell, and most of all by derision and reproofes,
or by oppression and iniuries. In respect whereof,
wee may say, as S. & Hierom out of Cyprian,
[Nullus diu tunc pericula proximus;] No man can
be long safe that is alwaies in danger. And therefore
as men that live in a bad ayre, or in time of a gene-
*rall contagion, are by more carefull to fence and arm-**

^(c) Hieron. in
lib. 1. Com-
mentar. in Amos Proem.
ad Pannach.

^(d) M^r. Gata-
ker in his Spi-
rituall Watch
§ 22. pag. 27.

themselves by taking of preseruatiues, by easing before they goe abroad, &c: So, if a man live in such a place and among such company, as where sinne doth beare sway; he should haue a speciall care to arme himselfe against the sinnes of that time and place, and to watch ouer his soule, lest hee should be infected with the common corruption.

These and such like sinnes as these, because they breed the greatest danger, are to bee sifted and censured with the greatest care. And so wee see that wise men haue held the like course in matters of this life, and haue found good successe by it. When the King of Syria was to fight with Israel, hee commanded his Captaines, *a Fight neither with small nor great, save onely with the King of Israel.* And the event sheweth, that the course was good: for when the King was slaine, *a Proclamation then went throughout the Host, Every man to his Citie, and every man to his owne Country.*

(a) 1 King. 12.
31.

(b) Ver. 5. 6.

(c) In pugna ad Maximam b. his Citie, and every man to his owne Country. And in
tempo Lacedem. moniorum, ut con- like fort Agis filius a gave aduice to the Lacedemo-
fuerit, in fo- nians in a certayne battell against the Thebans, that
l. in pugnareat they shold omit all others, and fight onely against
Epaminondas, who was the Leader of the Field,
and a man of as great wisdome as courage: and
he gave this reaon for it, because he being killed, it
would be easie to conquer all the rest: which (as my
Author saith) fell out accordingly. And so, when
& Goliath was slaine, the Philistines seeing that their
Champion was dead, fled before Israel. And so in
like manner in our conflicts with sinne, it will be
good counsell, that sometimes omitting all other
vices, we bend our scelues wholly against that sinne
which.

(d) 1 Sam. 17.
52.

which troubleth vs most: because if once wee haue quelled our master-sinnes, the Devils great Leaders and Champions, it will bee the more easie to chase away the rest. And for this cause, in the performance of this worke of Examination, a speciall care must bee had against these great Commanders, that they escape not away in the throng.

C H A P. IIII.

Of the maner to be obserued in this worke, or how a Christian should proceede in examining of himselfe.

 He matter being declared, the next thing to be considered, is the maner: for direction wherein, three things are in the beginning to bee noted.

1. That in all works of this kinde, the maner is much what to be regulated by the matter and the end. For Examination, is what kinde soever it be, being a searching or enquirie after something that we desire to know, is alwaies to be so performed, as may best serve for the bolting out of that truth which we search for. And as the matter, whereof the question is, and the end for which the enquirie is made, and the discoverie which is desired in this worke, doe differ and disagree; so the maner of proceeding in making the search.

will be different and vnlke it selfe, as the things whereto it is applyed do require. As for example, if the Goldsmith be to try his metall, hee vseth the touchstone and the fornace, because these are the proper meaneſ which his arte doth teach for finding out that which hee desireth to know. And if the Carpenter be to try his worke that hee hath framed, whether it be agreeable to arte, and fit for yſe, he vſeth his squire and line and compas, because they being applyed to his worke, will shew how well it is fitted for the purpose. And ſo in like maner, if a Physician bee to try the ſtate of his Patient, hee lookeſ vpon the vrine, feeleth the pulse, and obſerueth the ſyntomes. And if a Judge be to examine a ſuſpected person, he queſtioneſ him about circumſtances, and examineth him upon ſuſtigatoryes, as may entangle any man that meaneth by glozing ſuſtis to obſcure the truthe. Thus in examinations men follow that courſe which is fitteable to the matter, and peculiare for that end whereto it is referred.

2. Note.

(4) Cap. 2.

2. That Examination, as heere it is intended, being a *difſeſſion* of a mans life, for discerning his ſpirituall ſtate, is a kinde of *Indicarie* proceeding, as hath beeſe shewed alreadie. And therefore looke what courſe Judges do hold in their ſeſſions, or at their Affiſes, the like courſe will bee fit to be held in this worke. Now in their ſeſſions, this is the courſe: They firſt enquire into the *faits* of men, and that enquirie is made by the teſtimonie of witneſſes, and other prooſes that may shew what their deedes haue beeſe: and ſecondly, when they

they haue found out the truth of the fact, then they goe to the rule of the *Law*, and that being laid to the fact, directeth the Judge to giue sentence according vnto right. And so in these *Sessions* kept in the *conscience*, and held for the ordering of our soules, wee haue two things to enquire after; the one what our *actions* and *facts* haue beene, so farre forth as they concerne our spirituall life. And for finding out thereof, our best prooфе is the testimony of our owne conscience: which will be as good as a thousand witnessesse, if our selues corrupt it not. And the other is, how well these actions doe agree with *Gods Law*, (which is the *Law* that biadeth the *conscience*, and concerneth the soule;) that thence wee may learne what to iudge of our life, how farre forth it agreeeth with *Gods Law*, or swarueth from it.

¶ That the method or order of proceeding, is not altogether the same when our Examination is concerning the *principall* Obiect or some particular sinne, as it is when it is applied to the *generall* Obiect or all the moral actions of a mans life. And therefore ~~here~~ I will consider them seuerally and apart.

I. And first for the *generall* Obiect, and for the fitting of our *conscience* thereabout, wee must compare our life with *Gods Law*; & that may be done two wayes. For we may either begin with *Gods Law*, and first see what it doth require at our hands, and thence proceed to our selues, and question with our soules, how and wherein wee haue obserued or transgreſſed those rules. Or second-

ly, we may beginne with our selues, and enquire what our doings are ; and then goe to Gods Law, that we may learne what to iudge of such works.

If we begin with Gods Law, then we must doe two things,

First, we must get a competent knowledge of Gods Law, that we may know in some measure what each precept doth require of vs, and what the meaning is of all such Commandements as concerne our practice, the summe whereof is contained in the Decalogue or ten Commandements. For as an vnskilfull man is never the neerer for a *line or rule*, if he haue not beene taught the *Carpenters Trade*, nor knoweth not the vse of these things ; no more can a Christian be any whit the better for hearing or hauing of *Gods Law* to direct him, vnlesse he know the meaning of it, and can tell what vices are forbidden, and what vertues are commanded in every Precept. Whence it followeth, that they which haue never beene trained vp in the grounds of Religion, nor haue not the knowledge of their *Catechisme*, cannot possibly goe about this so necessary a worke with any dexterity or profit to their soules.

Secondly, when a man hath learned in some good sort the meaning of the Commandements, then in the second place he is to go through these Commandements one by one, and in each of them to consider what sinnes are there condemned, and what duties are there enjoyned, and hereupon still to question with his owne heart, *And haue I committed this sinne ? or, Hane I neglected that*

that duty? or, If I haue kept the precept, for the matter, yet haue I not broken it in the manner of performance, or in the intention of my minde? And thus we may proceed, when we begin with Gods Law.

But if we begin first with our selues, then wee may hold this course: first, (after some competent knowledge of the Law, which is euer presupposed in this worke,) we must take a view of our life, or of so much of it, as then we are occasioned and purposed to examine, and consider from time to time, and from one moment to another, how we haue beene busied, in what sort wee behaued our selues in it, and what haue beene our deeds, words, and thoughts, that deserue scanning: and hereupon we must still question with our selues, vpon every worke that admitteth such a question, what therein hath beene done amisse, or how we haue transgressed in the matter, or in the manner, or in the end, or in any circumstance. In which kinde, that we may proceede the more orderly, and vnderstand our selues and our estate the more distinctly, we must not passe ouer things in the grosse, and lap vp too much of our life in a generall and indistinct consideration; but rather labour to part and diuide our time by smaller parcels, that so we may see every thing apart and by it selfe. For which purpose, those who haue not better directions already, may be pleased to make use of these.

1. If we be to take a generall account of our whole life, and to examine our selues from our be-

beginning to the present time ; wee may diuide our life severall wayes. As first, by the times of our age, how we were busied, and in what manner we carried our selues towards God, when we were boyes, and when afterward we were young men, and when men of middle age ; and so on to our present time. Secondly, we may diuide our life by the severall callings and conditions of life, in which we haue spent our time : as what wee did when we were Scholars at the Grammar schoole, what, when we were seruants, or Apprentices, or vnder Tutors and Gardians ; what, when wee became Free-men, or householders, or at our owne liberty and disposing ; and what in the exercising of our particular trade or profession or course of life. As namely, *Clergie* men may consider how they haue dealt in their exercise of the Ministry, *Magistrates* in their places of government, *Merchants* in their trafficking, *Craftsmen* in their occupations, & every man in that vocation wherunto he is called, & in that professiō w^{ch} he doth exercise & bestow his life in. Thirdly, we may againe part and (as it were) subdiuide the time of our speciall calling by the speciall busynesses which wee haue gone thorow, while we haue liued in it ; as a *Merchant* may consider of his dealing, how iust or vniust it hath been in the commodities which he hath carried forth into the Indies, into the Easterne Countries, and into other Kingdomes abroad ; and how he behaved himselfe in fetching this or that commodity from such and such parts, and in venting his wares abroad after they were come

come home, &c. And so may other men do in the like cases, concerning the principall businesses and occasions, that occurre or happen in their severall professions or callings.

2. If we be to consider of some lesser portion of our life, (as religious men haue bee[n] accustomed to doe, by considering that time which hath passed them since their last either ordinarie or more solemne Examination,) then wee may part our moneths by weekes, and our weekes by daies, and each day by his severall houres; that our taske for the present being the lesse, our care and labour about each particular may be the greater.

These directions for the maner of proceeding in this generall Examinatiō, I haue represented to such as shall vouchsafe to reade this schedule; leauing them notwithstanding to their owne choise, which of these wayes they will follow, or whether they will follow any of them at all, if so bee they know how to vse a better in steade of them. For those who are accustomed to these asceticall exercises of devotion, may perhaps devise other more fitting courses or wayes of proceeding then these are: and it is reason, yea and a point of wisdome too, for euery man to make vse of those rules, which in his owne experience hee findeth most proper to his owne nature, and most powerfull for his reformation and amendment. I will onely adde thus much more before I goe on, that the more kindes and wayes of proceeding that euery man vseth, the more knowledge hee will gaine of his owne estate, and the more will he be

enabled to resist sinne, and to reforme his life and behaviour: for that which escapeth him in one maner and course of proceeding, may meete him in another; and what one course leaueth vnperfect, that the next may supply. And thus much shall suffice for the generall Object.

I I. Secondly, for the particular Object, and our examination about it, we may for our direction therein make vse of these and such like rules.

Rule. 1.

1. We must single out some predominant and dangerous sinne, and bestow our care about it for the time: first enquiring how, and when, and vpon what occasion wee haue fallen into it before-time; and then settling in our selues a *purpose* of heart to forbear it for the time to-come. In vndertaking of which purpose or resolution, it will be expedient, for our more easie & certaine victorie, to set to our selues some short space, in which we will force our selues to forbear that sinne: as namely that we will doe it for this present day, or till the next time that we shall examine our conscience againe, or the like. And when the prefixed time is come, we should question our selues, how well we haue performed that which we purposed to doe; and how and wherein we haue failed: and then begging pardon for our defects, we must beginne a new purpose, and prescribe our selues a like time for shunning of the same sinne: and so go from day to day, still correcting our former errour, and still tending our first purpose, till we haue gotten a full victorie. This rule is prescribed, and was obserued by Plutarch for repreſing

(a) *De Ira co-hibenda, in fine pag. 464.*
B. C.

of immoderate anger, and heereby, in processe of time
be attainted to a great measure of patience. And if we
obserue the like rule in pursuing our sinnes; wee
may finde a like help towards grace and goodnes.

2. In pursuit of the selected sinne, it will be ex- Rule 2.
pedient not to content our selues with purposes a-
gainst the maine sinne in generall, but more parti-
cularly and distinctly to bend our selues against the
speciall acts, occasions and opportunities of it. As for
example, Suppose *rash anger* is the sinne which a
man listeth and pursueth for the rooting of it out;
it will be fitting for him to resolve with himselfe,
not to speake harshly, nor to looke fiercely, nor to
use churlish behauour; whether his seruant dis-
please him with negligence, or his friend offend
him with vnsaithfulness, or his enemie prouoke
him with ill language and malicious dealing, &c.
In which case and course, speciall care is to be had,
that wee do especially set our selues against that
act, or that occasion, or that cause, by which wee
doe most vsually offend.

3. As oft as we finde any motion of the sinne Rule 3.
to stirre and shew it selfe within vs, it will be con-
uenient, not onely to withhold our consent, but
withall to *exercise* some acts of the *contrary vertue*.
As for example, if *desire of Revenge* bee the sinne
which stirreth vp our blood and boyleth within
vs, we must not only forbear to *avenge our selmes*, Rom.12.19.20
but farther also must force our selues to pray for
him that hath offended vs, and if he hunger, so feed
him; and if he thirst, to giue him drink; and to doe
for him any other office of loue, as occasion shall
serue.

fence. This Rule, if it be duly and sincerely obserued, will be able in time to quell the rage of the sinne, and will make it leesse forward to sollicit vs afterward, when it hath found such entertainement from vs alreadie.

Rule 4.

4. If in our daily Examination, we finde that we haue beeene defective in performing of what we purposed, especially if our failings haue beeene grear and dangerous; then it will not be amisse to amerce and punish our selves for such either our slothfulnesse or wilfulnesse. As namely, to enioine our selues some extraordinary abstinance from meate, recreation or easse; or by way of a Fine, to give some forfeiture out of our purfes; or to vse some such other holy revenge vpon our selues, the feare or smart whereof may make vs more carefull for afterward.

And this may suffice for the method and manner of proceeding.

CHAP. V.

OF THE TIMES OF EXAMINATION, IN WHICH IT IS TO BE EXERCISED.



He next thing to be considered, is, what may bee the fittest times for this exercise. And the times to be considered are two; *when* and *how often* it is to be vscd. For answere whereto, the Scriptures, for ought that I know or can obserue, haue determined no set or precise time,

time, which is necessarie alwaies to be obserued in the performance of this worke. Notwithstanding some rules there are, partly pointed at in the Scripture, and partly prescribed by holy men, which wee may make vse of for our good. And they so farre as I can gather and obserue, be these and such like.

1. There is no danger of surfetting vpon too much, nor need we feare lest we do performe it too often. For first, the oftener we reckon with our soules, the fewer new things we shall haue at every time to reckon for; and the fewer the things be, the more readily will they be called to minde, and they may bee scanned the more exactly: whereas multitude of things, if they come together, will hide one another, and take time one from another, and hinder the notice each of other; and still it may bee expected, that where many busynesses are tumbled in together, some will escape away in the shroag. And secondly, the oftener we take account, the fresher will our deeds and actions be in remembrance; because being lately done, they haue not had space to slip out of our mindes. And therefore the oftener, the better: nor can there lightly be any danger in being too diligent. The consideration whereof made St. Bernard say of this worke, ^a [*Si semper hoc quum opus est, facit semper facit;*] ⁽⁴⁾ If ye will doe this as often as there is neede of it, you must doe it alwaies. And it may bee thought, that in respect hereof, the Prophet, speaking of this worke, did double his words, ^b Let us (saith hee) search and ⁽⁵⁾ Lam. 3. 40.

(4) Bern. in
Cantic. Sermon
58. in fine.
pag. 742.

try our mains : implying, that as he doth double his words, so we should double the worke, and after we haue done it once, do it yet oer againe.

2. The time that learned and devout men

(a) *Hoc scilicet* *se-
gula diebus.* —

*Et quod facis in
peccatis, nec finis
ut dies pra-
tereat, quicunq[ue]
seculi rationem
mea, ut peccati-
ensem inducat
oblitus: utrumque
etiam tibi memori-
as mox ergo
reptilius niger.*

Chrysostom. Exp.
in Psal. 4. pag.
27. A.

(b) *Psal. 51. 3.*

(c) *Virtutum*

*seuorum oblii-
peccata sola me-*

*maria retinobit:
non, ut huius le-
peccati homines,*

qui peccatorum

*seuorum memori-
am exsunt. Chr.*

*hom. 2. in Ps.
50. p. 1003. D.*

(d) *Annon codicet*

domi habeat, in

quo quotidiana

peccata scribat.

Eccl. Chrysibid.

p. 1004. D.

have beene accustomed to obserue, and doe thinke most convenient for an ordinary practice of this dutie is, that once every day at least, every man should consider of all such things as haue passed since his last reckoning. So saith S. Chrysostome,

a Let this account be kept every day: and that which thou doest in a matter of money, which is, that oblitus: utrumque etiam tibi memori as mox ergo repletius niger. *breed confusion in the reckoning; doe the same also in matters of thy soule, and affi-
tions of thy life, every day.* And the same Father, preaching vpon that

Text, b My sinne is euer before me, noteth that the Saints in old time were wised to forges their vertues, and remember their sinnes; not as men now a dayes

*(faith hee) do use to doe, who put their sinnes out of their remembrance. And heereupon he aduiseth vs not long after, in the same Sermon; a *Hast thou not a Booke in thine house, wherein thou writeſt thy daily accounts? Haue also a like Booke in thy conſcience, and write therein thy daily transgresſions. I meane, (faith he) when thou layest thee downe vpon thy bed, — bring forth thy Booke, and take an account of thy sinnes. And to like purpose speake many others, as may further be ſcene in the next rule following.**

3. The time which learned and wise men haue allotted for this worke, is especially in the Evening

ning or at night: because that time is a time of vacation and leisure. For in the day time wee haue our Trades to follow, and our markets to make, and our Law-suites to attend on, and our friends to talke with, and our families to prouide for; and one busynesse or other will euer be comming in the way, and interrupt vs: but the night is a time of priuatenesse and retirednesse, when occasions of the world being ouerpasseſſed, we haue the more freedome to conferre with our soules. To this purpose it is, that *David* tooke the night time to meditate in; ^a *I haue remembred thy name,* (a) Psal. 119. 55. *O Lord, in the night, and haue kept thy Law.* And that time he tooke to lawent his finnes; ^b *Euery night (saith he) I make my bed to swimme, and water my couch with my teares.* And that time hee tooke also to examine his foule in; ^c *I call to remembrance my song in the night; I commune with mine owne heart.* And that time he biddeth vs also take for the like purpose; ^d *Commune with your owne heart upon your bed, and be still.* Upon which words of the Prophet, we haue this note given vs by St. Chrysostom: ^e *What meaneth this, (saith he) that he saith, Commune with your hearts upon your beds?* And he answereſſeth, It is this; *After supper time, when ye are going to sleepe, and are ready to lye downe on bed, and haue great quietnesſe and silence, without the presence or disturbance of any, then creake a Tribus nall for the conscience.* And a little after; *When nother friend doth distract thee, nor seruantis prouoke thee, nor multitude of busynesses doth preſſe thee; then take account of thy life, what thou haſt done in the day.*

(b) Psal. 6. 6.

(c) Psal. 77. 6.

(d) Psal. 4. 4.

(e) *Post casum*

inquit, quando

in dormitum,

quando etiaſt de-

cubauis, & nullo-

præſente, multa

quiſe & ſilencii,

et nemine inter-

turbante proſun-

di tranquillitas,

excita ſadiconum

conſciencie.

(f) *Quando neq;*

amicus intertur-

bat, nec ſervulus

irritat, nec turba-

negat in uerbi

tunc uia inter-

duo alter ratione

exigit Chevio.

Expos. in Psal.

4. 4. pag. 264

C. D.

(2) Quod in lecto
two lates, nec
quisquam est qui
tibi negotium fa-
cessat, antiquum
sumus irreat,
libellum in mediis
product, et peccata
tui tecum - p.
12, dicens apud
seipsum, Num-
quid hodierno
die, vel sermo-
ne vel opere
peccauit Chry-
Hom. 2. in Pl.
50. pag. 1004, he)
day time before. And the same Father in another
place, a When thou layest thee downe vpon thy bed, and
no man is by to distract thee, before sleep come on, bring
forth the booke of thy conscience, & recount thy sins with
thy selfe, saying to thy selfe, HAVE I THIS DAY
OFFENDED IN WORD OR DEEDE? Hee
addeth, b In the day thou hast not time for thy
worke; but feare of Superiors, and conference with
friends, and care of busynesses, and forecasting for ed-
cation of children, & prouision for wife, & preparation
for diet, and a thousand things beside do distract thee;
And to like purpose S. Basil, c When the day (saith
it is expedient that every mans conscience should bee,

(b) *Divers tempore id facient* spacio nū habet; it was a rule from their forefathers, how men ought to verum et Prefer florū metu, & fodalū colloquio, et negotiorū cura, & alendo p̄m studiū, & uxori procuratio, acceptando menti sollicitudo, & p̄sca oratione. *It is expedient that every man's conscience* *should be* *judged of his own heart.* And *Dorotheus* saith, ^d that cleaneſſe themſelues, that in the evening they ſhould queſtion themſelues, how they had paſſed the day, and a gaine in the morning, how they had paſſed the night. *And Bernard* ; ^e *Let Iuſtice ſit and iudge, let the conſcience ſtand impleaded and accuſing it ſelſe.* No man lonelh thee more, nor no man will iudge thee better. In the morning exact an account of the night paſt, and imposē upon thy ſelſe watchfulnes for the day to come. *I- dem Ibid. pag. 2005.* In the evening require a reckoning of the day paſt, and

(c) *Completo iam die, omniq; opere cum corporis, tam spiritu etiam absente, meq; tibi obtemperare ad auxilium meum non possumus* (c) *ad auxilium meum non possumus* (d) *Documentum nos sepius patres nostri, quo pello purgationis noscimus per singulas dies, ut sciatis in vesperam perfruamur nobiscum, quando transaliam sum in exequitur, et rufum manu quoniam nollem. Op. Dorothea, to. 1. Biblioth. Post. edit. Grecol. Doctrina 11. pag. 814. (e) *Sed et iudicantis iustitia, sed rea et supersum accusans conscientia. Nemo te plus diligit; nemo te fidelius iudicabit. Manu prostrata nolle fac ut tempore exaltationem, & venit ab dei tibi indicatis cautionem. Vespera diei prostrata, rufum enim exire, et superuenientem nolle fac iudicant. Bern. de vita solit. ad fratr. de Mont-Dieu, p. 1039. D.**

lay an injunction for the night comming. And in like manner speake other spirituall Masters, who vndertake to prescribe rules of a religious life. Whereby it may be seene, how they do generally agree vpon it, as a receiued Principle, that euery night men should take accounts and examine themselues for the day past: but in the two last authoritie we may further note, that besides the accounting at night for the day past, they require also a reckoning each morning for the former night. And surely that is not to no purpose: for eu'en in the night reserved for rest, there do many times passe thoughts, affections, purposes, yea and some actions also, which as they do well deserue censure, so may easily be forgotten, if they be deferred till multitude of busynesses the day following, have bred a confusion in the memorie.

4. It is a very fit time for this worke, when we haue beene about some important busynesse, in which there may bee occasion either of doing good, or of offending in some speciaall manner. Thus Job, ^(a) when his sonnes had beene feasting, because great cheare and much merriment are most times occasions of some sinnes, therefore at their returne home he called them together and sanctified them, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, It may be my sonnes haue sinned, and cursed God in their heart. Thus did Job continually. And thus Chirilians should doe, when they returne from making purchases, or striking of bargaines, or following of Law-suites, or feasting with their friends, or debating of controwerries, or any other the like works

works and imployments of moment, they should call together their thoughts, and examine their hearts concerning all the former passages, and sanctifie their soules by lamenting their sorne, and purposing a better life.

It is a fit time also to examine our consciences, when we haue some speciall occasion to prepare our selues for God, or to intreat his fauour in some speciall sort. Thus the Church of Israel, when they were in distresse, and fighed to God for relief, they encouraged each other, *Let us search and try our waies, and turne againe to the Lord.* And S. Paul, when the Lords Supper was to be administered, because it was a matter of great weight, and might breake much hartie to the unworthie Receiver, therefore prescribeth this rule of preparation to all that minded to partake of that Sacra-

Lam. 3. 40.

Cor. 11. 28.

ment; *Let a man examine himself: and so let him eate of the bread, and drinke of this cup.* And so in like manner, if we haue any distresse or danger by reason of our sinnes, that is a fit time to examine our selues, that by serious repentance wee may goe to begge pardon. And if we bee so receiue the blessed Supper of our Lord, then we shold examine also, last being unprepared for so holy a works, we preue unworthy partakers of Christs body. And if we keepe a yoming day, for the humiliatiōn of our soules, that is a fit time, that by taking a view at our sinnes, we may bee the more dectified with sorrow. And if we keepe a Sabbath day, or some great day of festivity vnto the Lord, that also is a fit time; that our soules having by examination beeē purged from our sinnes, may

may bee prepared to heare, and pray, and praise God with attention and zeale. But especially if wee be cast vpon our sick beds, in danger of death, and in expectation of our dissolution; then is a most urgent time to take acoount of our soules, that our reckonings may be made euen, before we be called to account at Gods Tribunall seate. For as the tree falleth, so it lyeth: and if wee die vnpreserved, we shall be vnable to answer him who is the ludge of quick and dead. In these therefore, and all other cases of like moment and consequence, there is great cause to vse this worke.

Lastly, besides those daily and casuall times, it is a conuenient time also, after some good space passed in this manner, to examine our selues ouer againe; as for example, after a moneth or after a yeere to consider our selues for the moneth or yeere last passed, that thereby we may see how wee have profited, or how wee have decayed for that space of time. For ^a as our members grow, and our shape every day changes, and our black haire turne gray, while we perceive it not, nor can tell when and how these changes come; yet after some space of time we may easily discerne, that we are changed: so it is in the state of our soules; besides the manifest changes of it, which do appear while they are in doing, there are certaine insensible alterations, which are not to bee discernd, but after some continuance of time. And for the rectifying of these, it is necessarie to take a more generall view of our soules; then in euery dayes examination we can doe; that we may see wherein wee are better or worse, or how our

(a) *Sicut non sentimus quo modo crescent membra, proficit corpus, maturat species, migrat corporum albedo in canis; Hoc quippe omnia, nobis resistentibus, aguntur in nobis; ita mens nostra per momenta vivendi ipsa carari via a similitudine perpetuatur. &c.*
Greg. Moral. lib. 25. c. 6.

zeale is increased or decayed, ouer that which it was a moneth, or halfe a yeere, or a yeere, or longer time before. For by this meanes we shall not onely see our grosser and more apparent faults, but even our decay of seruour and religion, which creepeth vpon vs vnawares, and so learne to blow the coales of zeale, and to stirre vp the grace of

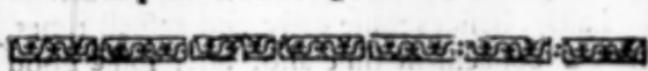
(a) Apoc. 3. 2. God that is in vs, that wee may *strengthen the things which remaine, and are ready to dye.* For which purpose the Ancients haue beene accustomed to vse the time of Lent, as I haue shewed in

(b) Treatise of an ^b other place more fully.

Fasting, chap.

10. pag. 119, &c.

231.



Chap. VI.

Of the benefits of this worke, or what good use it may serve a Christian for.

 *Having hitherto in some measure declared the nature of Examination, with the adiuncts appertaining thereto, I come now in the last place to consider the benefits that wee may reap by it: the consideration whereof may animate vs to abound in this worke of the Lord, when we shall know that our labour is not in vaine in the Lord. And for that purpose I haue gathered and obserued these uses following.*

I. It will be a good meanes to fit and leade vs to *repentance and amendment:* and that in two respects,

1. Because it will serue to discover vnto vs our sinnes,

Examination
is a good
meanes for
Repentance.

2. Reason.

thus. 11

finnes, and make vs see our wretched and miserable condition. For we (such is our frailty and corruption) do daily, yea hourely commit many finnes, which through heedlessness or vnskilfulness, or strength of passion, or because wee are intent vpon some other businesse which then taketh vp all our thoughts ; we obserue not, or discerne not for the present. But businesses ended, and the occasions and tentations passed, when we are more free both from distraction and passion ; if then wee take a time to bethinke our selues, and to recall all that is past ; then our thoughts will be our owne, and wee shall in cold blood be able to see many things, which before went vespied. Then, for example, we shall be able to tell
"our owne soules, Such a time I met with a bon-
" companion, and ouer-shot my selfe with ex-
" cesse of drinke ; and such a time I met with a wan-
" ton Minion, who inueigled me with her lookes,
" and I was ensnared with her loue ; and such a
" time I met with a crosse-neighbour, and my
" heart did rise against him at the very sight of
" him ; and at such a time I met with some merry-
" mates, and in our idle chatt I disgraced my
" neighbour behinde his backe ; and such a time,
" when I was in praying or hearing, my heart was
" wandring about the vanities of the world, or my
" selfe fell asleepe while God was admonishing
" me of things belonging to my soule : and many-
" times in one day I haue sinned against God by
" vniust dealing with my neighbour. One I decei-
" vned by a lie, and another by vnsound commo-
" dities, and a third by counterfeit & base money,
" and

" and a fourth by faire promises and protestations, which I never meant to performe. And an hundred other such sins as these we might discouer in our selues within a shorte time, if we did take accounts of our selues at conuenient times. And if our sinnes were once in this sort set before our face, they would make vs tremble for feare, and blush for shame, and give no rest to our heads, nor slumber to our eyes, till by sorrow and repentance we had made our peace with our God.

2. Reason.

Examination rightly performed, will bee a meanes to leade vs to repentance, because it will shew vs with what patience and long-suffering God hath borne with vs, and in what desperate case our soules stood, but that God in mercie spared vs beyond our deserving. For it will appeare that he might haue stricken vs dead many a time, while we were prouoking him by our sinnes. For example; while wee were drunke, and could not speake a readie word; or while wee were satisfiying our vncleane lusts in the Harlots bed; or while wee were abusing Gods Name by profane oathes and execrations; or while we were taking a bribe to persiert Justice; or while wee were telling a lye to vndermine our neighbours; then and at such an instant God might haue cut vs off, and haue drawne vs to the Judgement with a harlot in our armes, or a blasphemous oath in our mouths, or a bribe of oppression in our hands, or a murderous and malitious thought in our hearts. And if then God had taken vs away, as he &c. with ver.

(a) Kin. 16.9
(b) Dan. 5.2, 3,
&c. with ver. 30.
(c) Act. 12. 21,
22, 23.

Elab in his drunkenesse, and Belazar in his profaneness; and Herod in his haughti-

haughtiness, and *Zimri* and *Cosbi* in their vn-^{(a) Numb. 25.}
" cleanness : Lord, what might haue become of ^{6,7,8.}
" my poore soule ? Or, what could I haue expe-
" cted, but to haue died in sinne without repen-
" tance, and to haue liued ever after in torment
" without hope ? But he hath spared me, and it is
" his mercy thus by his patience to bring me to re-
" pentance, that I might bee saued. Now what
Christian heatt would not tremble to think what
great danger he hath escaped, and would not melt
into teates to remember what great mercy he hath
receiued ? And what soule would not be moued
hereby to hasten his repentence, either that hee
wight prevent all such danger hereafter to him-
selfe, or that he might shew a thankfull heart to
God, that hath spared him in such manner ?

And in this sort will Examination leade vs to
repentance and amendment, if we use it diligently
and in due order. And that is the first use for
which this worke doth serue.

J.L. Secondly, it will be a good meanes to *pre-
sent* future sinnes ; and that in two respects also.

2. Because the finding out of our former er-
rors, and the sinnes that haue past, will lay before
our eyes our speciall infirmities, and will make vs
see both the corruptions that cleane closest vnto
vs, and the tentations that oftenest preuaile with
vs. For if the accounts be diligently made, one
will finde, that he is soonest overcome with pride ;
and another, that he is oftenest taken with lust ;
and another, with vaine-glory ; and another
with reuengefull thoughts ; and every one with
somewhat, vnto which he is inclined by nature or
aid.

Examination
a meanes to
present sinne.
2. Reason.

custome, or to which he is allured by ill company and daily tentations, or to which hee is forced by threatnings or feare of offending. And when once we see how we were mis-led, and what it was that deceived or overcame vs; we shall heerby learne how to discouer the danger, and how to arme our selues against the assault, and how to handle our weapons when occasion shall require: and every former error will make vs more wise and more wary against the next on-set. For as among men he that findeth himselfe to have been deceived with faire words, will never trust that party any more; and as he that hath been coozied by counterfeit wares, will learne by that error to judge better of the like commodities for afterward: so in the case of our soules, a wise Christian, by every error that he hath committed and discouered, will learne more wisdome to prevent the like danger.

2. Reason.

2. Examination will be a meanes to *present* sinne, because hauing humbled vs with sorrow, it will make vs afraid of the like smart, and resolute to stand out against all tentations. For we vsually say, that the childe that hath beene once burned in the flame, will feare to come neare the fire any more: and so when by discussing our conscience, wee haue learned to condemne our selues, as wretched Caitifes vnworthy of any mercy, the smart of that which is past will make vs afraid to come neare the like danger for euer after. Nor will any man bee so prone to offend, if hee know that once within 24 hours he must come to correction, and be censured by the iust sentence of his

his owne conscience. So St. Chrysostome, ^(a) The faulte, (saith he) being afraid of the sentence that passed on him the day before, will be more slow to offend, lest he do againe incurre the same censure, and be lashed and beaten as before he was. And St. Ambrose, ^(b) While we bewaile sins past, we exclude sinnes to come: and the censuring of our euill doings, is a disciplining of vs to innocency of life. And Seneca, bending himselfe against the vice of immoderate anger, for the moderating or rather abolishing of it, thinketh this worke of Examination, in which we passe censure vpon our selues, will be most effectuall. For, ^(c) Anger (saith he) will cease, and become more coole, when it knoweth it must come every day before a Judge that will not spare it. And surely, no man will either shame himselfe every day before God and his owne conscience, nor iudge and condigne himselfe for his misdoings, vntesse he both meane to amend them, and find some sweetnesse and comfort in the practice of this vngratefull worke. In regard whereof, I may truly say, (and that shall be the clause of this point,) Esther exa-
mining will make a man leue his sinning, or sinning will make him leue off examining.

III. Thirdly, the due performance of this worke, will make vs more *indifferent* and more equall in iudging of our neighbours and brethren. For if a man do not sift his soule, and discouer his owne corruption; selfe-loue and pride, bred in mans nature euer since Adams fall, will make him to ouer-weene himselfe, and vnder-value others. And this is the chiefe reason why men are so favourable towards their owne faults, and so

I peremptory

Examination
maketh vs in-
different judges
betweene o-
thers and our
selues.

peremptory against other mens. But if men by siftting their soules, haue discouered their sinnes, the sens[e] of their owne wants, will make them more pitifull towards others: as St. Paul implyeth, when he exhorteth men to meeknesse towards other men from this consideration, because ^athemselves were sometimes unwise, disobedient, &c. and from this,

(a) *Titus 1.15.*

(b) *Galatians 6.1.*

(c) *1 Tim. 1.15.*

(d) *Ad. Reg. hoc dicebat Paulus in 1.15.*

stendi principia-

tions, sed offendit-

da afflictiones. Qui

quam perfida ex-

amanda scilicet

intelligit, suo pa-

cato malum pro-

curam par. 1.15.

exstimes, quod

non fecit facili-

intelligit. Bern.

de vita solitar.

ad fratres de

Monte Del.

pag. 1030. 2.

** Examinati-*

on confortabit

against de-

spair.

selues were sometimes unwise, disobedient, &c. and from this, b. Let thyselfes also be tempted. And where St. Paul faith of himselfe, c. that he was chiefe of sinners, S. Bernard noteth, d. that he speake thus falsely, out of rashnesse and temerity, but feelingly, and out of the sense and esteeme that he had of his sinnes. For hee that by examining himselfe, doth throughly understand himselfe, thinketh no mans sin to be equal to his owne, which he knoweth not so well as his owne. And therefore, if men would carefully performe this worke in examining themselues, they would not rashly condemne others without cause..

III. * This daily reckoning with our selues, will be a meanes to strengthen vs against despair, and to comfort vs in a time of temptation and feare. For if the Deuill shall present our sinnes before our face, and aggrauate them, that hee may drive vs to despair; then our former practise of this dutie will be a helpe to support vs in so waighty.

1. Because by often reckoning with our soules, we haue gotten the true knowledge of our states, we haue found out our sins, both which they be, and of what qualitie they are: and therefore wee shall not so easily be deceived by Satan, if he preesse them beyond their pitch, and aggrauate them beyond their condition, as in times of distresse hee usually doth.

2. Because

2. Because by this daily reckoning and judging of our selues, we haue made all even betweene God and our soules. For hauing confessed our sinnes, and censured our selues, and fled to God for forgiuenesse, we haue his promise of remission and pardon. And then whatsoeuer our sinnes be, (as certainly they are both the fewer and the lesser for the performance of this worke, but whatsoeuer they be) we know they cannot hurt vs, because God hath forgiuen them. And these things will be vnto vs matter of great comfort in a time of conflict and distresse ; at which time a little peace of conscience will be worth all the world. For whereas men that haue liued securely, without casting vp of their accounts, are in times of temptation ouerwhelmed with horrour, being neither able to give comfort to themselves, nor to receive it from others : he that hath vsed a daily reckoning with his soule, will bee moued at the sight of his sinnes, rather to blesse God for his mercy, because he hath pardoned them, than to despair of his mercy, for feare that he will not pardon them.

V. Fifthly and lastly, our judging of our selues Examination is a meanes to prevent Gods heavier judgement afterward. For God will haue our sinnes to be discovered one way or other, and will haue vs to be convicted and iudged for them: and if our selues do bolt them out, and produce them, he will cover them ; and if wee accuse and condemne our selues, hee will absolve and acquit vs ; and if wee punish our offences, hee will forgiue them. Whereupon St. Chrysostome concludeth,

(a) Pro. 18.13.
Psal. 32.9.
2 Cor. 11.31
2 Cor. 11.31.

(a) *Item si quis
quietem peti-
tur, hoc indicit
in nos: idoneum
anim ad hanc rem
hoc tempus est.*
¶. *Id si quic-
cet diligenter fa-
cias, terribili su-
tari iudicis Tri-
bunali ipsius affi-
ster. Chrysost.*
Hom. 44 in
Math. pag.
398. B.
(b) *Zeph. 1. 12.*
(c) *Psal. 50. 21.*
(d) *Eccles. 12.
vii.*

deth, that ^a if a man doe diligently every day per-
forme this worke of examination, he may stand with
comfort before the dreadfull Barre, of the great
Judge. But if we neglect this dutie, or slubber
it ouer without care, he will take it into his owne
hands, and will performe it to the purpose; hee
^b will search Jerusalem with candles; and hee ^c will
reproyne the ungodly, and set his sinnes in order before
his eyes: and hee ^d will bring every worke into
judgement, whether it be good or euill: and nothing
shall goe for nought, that hath heene done against
his Law. For, *[aut bonime puniente, aut Deo in-
dicante plectentur.]* they must be punished either by
our owne censure, or by the sentence of God, who is
the great Judge of all the world. And in this sort
our reckoning with our selues will prevent Gods
judging of vs at the last day.

These and such like be the benefits which wee
may reap by this exercise.

Out of the consideration of all which, I think
I may iustly apply to this worke of Examination,
that which Moses spake of Gods Word deliv-

(e) *Deut. 32. 47* red to the Israelites; ^e *It is no vaine thing conser-
ning vs, because it is our life, and through this thing
we may prolong our dayes in a blessed and happy
state for evermore.* And this bittre consideration
is argument enough, both to commend the necess-
arie of the worke, and to command our diligence
and care for the practice of it. But yet to set a little
more edge upon our affections, wee may hence
deduce fourre considerations applicable to our
practice and state of life.

1. *We may heare by see what the cause is, why*
most

most of vs, notwithstanding our hearing, and reading, and praying, and communicating, yet do rather decay then thrise in grace. For though I will not deny, but this defect may be ascribed to some other causes also; yet seeing Examination is so viesfull for *repentance*, and so powerfull for *amendment* and reformation, the neglect of this must needs breed a great defect of grace: even as the absence of the sunne, which is the fountaine of heate, maketh way for frost and cold weather. Nor is it any maruell that *negligence* in accounting, produceth such decay in our soules; for even the like negligence in taking of accounts in our trades, doth breed an evident decay in our worldly estates. For if wee shoule passe daies and weekes and moneths, without accounting our receipts and expences, every cunning Chapman abroad would ouer-reach vs, and every false seruant at home might robbe vs, while wee thought on no harme, nor perceioed how or where in wee were wronged. Now there is no Chapman so vitallie to deceiue, as the Devil is; nor any seruant so false to his master, as our owne hearts are to vs; and therfor if we passe daies and weekes and moneths, yea and yeaeres too, without examining our consciencies, and calling our hearts to account, as most of vs doe; it is no maruell if we decay in godnesse every day, till at length we passe Bankrupts. Nay in this it were awaider if wee shoule loog subish, without being vicerly vudabol. Seeke then bo-mauylh that there is so little religion in the world, so long as wee know that therit is so mōre *conscience* of the equitie of things in england.

Jer. 8. 6.

2. We may obserue heire a reason why God doth many times lay *crosses* vpon vs; and though we pray and fast and call for mercy, yet finde not that easē nor that deliverance which wee expect. For if Examination bee so effectuall for removing of Gods judgements, as hath bee shewed; then certainly if Gods anger doe continue vpon vs, and his hand be stretched out still; it is an evident signe, that we haue not judged our selues, nor erected a Tribunall for the conscience within vs, as in duty and in wisdome we shold haue done. Thus the Prophet threatneth the Iews with Iudgements, because *no man repented him of his wickednesse*, saying, *What haile I done?* implying, that as pardon cannot bee expected without repentence, so repentence cannot bee hoped for without examination & questioning with our soules. And therefore we neede not maruell that Gods Iudgements are continued vpon vs, seeing we never take care to passe judgement vpon our selues.

3. We may hereby see, how it commeth to passe that many men haue grosse and conspicuous faults, which themselues discerne not, though euen childe abroad can point at them and display them. For if Examination bee so good a meanes to represent our finnes, as in a glasse, vnto vs; then they which see not their open finnes, are not accustomed to make vse of this meanes. And therefore, as when wee see a man come abroad with some notable deformity about his face; wee may conclude that that man hath not lately looked himselfe in his glasse: so if we see a man blinde in judging of his owne finnes, which are to others

as conspicuous as the spoes in a mans face, wee may build vpon it, that man doth not vse to looke himselfe in the glasse of his conscience, and by Examination to take a view what his deformities are.

4. We may hence gather matter of *encouragement*, to breake thorow all difficulties, and to shake off our wonted drowsinesse, that wee may with alacritie and perseuerance goo thorow with this worke. For if Examination bee so necessarie for *repentance* and *reformation* : and so effectuall to breed vs *comfort* in our greatest agonie, and to avert Gods *Judgements* for our faines : then every wise man will conclude, that this is a worke as necessarie as his daily foode. For say that a man cared not for grace and amendment, (which were almost desperate and gracelesse resolution, yet say a man cared not for these :) is there any man living, that would not be glad of some comfort when he lyeth a dying, or would not labour to be freed from the plagues that God powreth vp on vnrepentant sinners ? Let vs then but seriously minde these gracious effects of a strict accounting with our soules, and I hope we shall not prove so gracelesse, as to refuse our owne mercie, and wilfully to cast away those precious soules, which Christ hath purchased at so deare a rate. I beseech then every Christian, that either desirereth heaven, or feareth hell, that if he haue boene negligent in this dutie heretofore, he now at length beginne a due and serious performance of it ; and even double his future care, that he may redeeme his former negligence : remembryng wthall, if still bee-

... were willing to examine their consciences
every day, will rise up in judgment against flesh-
full Christians, that passe on day by day, without
ever taking account of their doings. Now we may
consider further, that even our selfe is to rise up
against our selves at the last judgement; and by
our care for our slaves in the world, condemns our
carelessness for the state of our souls. For if we
know it to be so needfull for our worldly estates,
to keepe an account of our expences and receipts;
what excuse can we haue for our selves, that we
haue for many dayes and weeke, no account any
account of our liues and conuersation? And so
etc, every such thinge as may be thought of. Most of
any Christian read therefore how I touched them,
that we may be at last inwardly touched with a
feeling of our owne want, and desire of God
that he will open our eyes, that we may
see what is behouemental for vs.

